

2005 King County Comprehensive Plan Update Area Zoning Study

Department of Development and Environmental Services

Study Area: White Center
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Summary:

This area of approximately 6.14 acres is currently designated as an Unincorporated Activity Center on the King County Comprehensive Plan Land-Use Map. The predominant zoning is I-SO, Industrial within an Economic Redevelopment Special District Overlay. Three of the parcels are zoned CB-SO, Community Business within the Economic Redevelopment Special District Overlay.

It is proposed that the land-use designation in this area remain Urban Activity Center and that zoning be modified on selected parcels to:

- reflect the current uses of parcels within the study area,
- encourage redevelopment of vacant lots and underutilized properties, and
- permit the rezoning of parcels with existing industrial uses to commercial business zoning, as the market demands.

If these modifications are approved the new zoning in the area will be predominately CB-SO, Community Business within an Economic Redevelopment Special District Overlay.

Two parcels with existing industrial uses will retain the existing industrial zoning, and a potential CB zone is proposed to be added to allow property owners the option of rezoning the property to community business at a future date should they choose to redevelop these properties. The Economic Redevelopment Special District Overlay is retained.

Maps indicating the proposed amendments are attached.

Background:

The White Center Community Action Plan adopted in November 1994 established a vision for the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center as a healthy business climate. The zoning tools employed in the plan, including the Economic Redevelopment Special District Overlay, reflect the community's strong desire to see development of vacant parcels and redevelopment of underutilized properties in the business areas. Now, more than ten years later, there is a need to reassess the effectiveness of existing zoning tools. Many parcels in the Activity Center remain vacant and underutilized; the community's vision has not been realized.

Public investment in the Greenbridge Hope VI project triggered the sub-area zoning study. While findings from several recent studies, including the Land Use Transportation

Air Quality and Health (LUTAQH) Report¹ and White Center Business District and Revitalization Plan², were instrumental in defining the boundaries of the study area and developing recommendations for change. It has been suggested that White Center is at a crossroads. The sub-area zoning study is intended to determine whether zoning changes are necessary to foster redevelopment in accordance with the community's vision.

Applicable King County Comprehensive Plan Policies:

- U-148 Unincorporated activity centers in urban areas should provide employment, housing, shopping, services and leisure-time amenities to meet the needs of the regional economy. The mix of uses may include:
- a. Health, human service and public safety facilities;
 - b. Retail stores and services;
 - c. Professional offices;
 - d. Business/office parks;
 - e. Multifamily housing and mixed-use developments;
 - f. Heavy commercial and industrial uses, when there is direct freeway or rail access;
 - g. Light manufacturing; and
 - h. Parks and open space.
- U-153 Development within the designated White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, as shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, shall be in accordance with the White Center Community Action Plan.
- U-154 The White Center Community Action Plan establishes the following zoning as appropriate within the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center: Urban Residential with a density of twelve to forty-eight dwelling units per acre, Neighborhood Business, Community Business, Office and Industrial.
- U-155 In the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, existing Industrial uses should be zoned and regulated to preserve their use into the future. Conversion of industrial properties to other uses shall be strictly limited.
- U-156 In the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, new major residential developments should include low-impact design features and should promote public health by increasing opportunities for physical activity in daily life. The development should include: safe walkways and bicycle lanes with access to commercial areas, schools, and community facilities; trails; and pocket parks.

¹ The LUTAQH report, entitled Travel Behavior, Environmental, & Health Impacts of Community Design & Transportation Investment, is the product of a collaborative study conducted by the King County Departments of Transport and Development and Environmental Services, Puget Sound Regional Council, the Cities of Seattle, Kent and Redmond to address linkages between land-use, transportation, and air quality. The report will be released in January 2005.

² White Center Business District Analysis and Revitalization, September 2002. Economic Consulting Services with Kasprisin-Pettinari Design, Insight GIS, Transportation Solutions Inc. Prepared for the King County Office of Regional Policy and Planning.

- U-325 Through local subarea planning and coordination with other agencies and organizations, King County should use zoning, incentives or other measures to ensure that an appropriate proportion of the land adjacent or near to major public infrastructure facilities is used to capitalize on the economic benefit of that infrastructure. The surrounding land uses should be buffered or compatible with economic development uses.

Applicable White Center Community Action Plan Policies:

- ECD-4 Industrial-designated portions of the White Center Urban Village are located in proximity to commercial and residential areas. King County should encourage full utilization of these industrial areas consistent with maintenance of high quality commercial residential areas.
- ECD-15 New multifamily development (24-48 dwelling units per acres) is encouraged as infill development on lands near the urban village and as part of a mixed-use development within the designated Urban Village Boundary.

Analysis:

Greenbridge, and its expected community impacts, inspired and provides justification for amending the zoning within the study area. The proposed zoning changes are consistent with King County Comprehensive Plan Policies and White Center Community Action Plan Policies. Community Business (CB) is a permitted zoning designation within an Economic Revitalization Special District Overlay. The types of land-uses permitted in a Community Business zone support the development of pedestrian design features and public health enhancements that are encouraged by both plans. This zoning also allows for a mix of uses and invites more retail, which is appropriate given the increase in residential development resulting from the Greenbridge development.

Community Business zoning not only allows land-uses that support increased retail and office development, but it will encourage the type of residential development desired by the community. ECD-15 in the White Center Community Plan calls for new multifamily development “as part of a mixed-use development within the designated Urban Village Boundary.” Increased residential development in this area is further supported by the LUTAQH study, which calls for a “greater concentration of people living in and around the commercial core” to enhance the walkability of the community.

Several policies specifically address the rezoning and regulation of industrial zoned parcels within Unincorporated Activity Centers. County Comprehensive Plan Policy U-155, “strictly limits” the “conversion of industrial properties to other uses.” This policy does not equate to a complete prohibition of industrial conversion and is justified in the sub-area for the following reasons.

1. Existing industrial zoned parcels have a limited potential for industrial redevelopment.

In 2002, the King County Office of Regional Policy and Planning commissioned an economic study and revitalization plan for the White Center Commercial Business District (CBD), which includes the study area. The report found that “there is limited potential for light industrial and non-office, non-retail uses but there is zoning for it” (page 2-31). The study concludes that there are several sites within the White Center CBD ripe for redevelopment, yet zoned for industrial use.

“The land north of SW 100th Street may be considered as part of an expanded commercial district with mixed-use developments rather than set aside for industrial use due to its close location to the commercial core and adjacent residential areas.”

Further, the analysis suggests development in retail, office or residential uses north of 100th Street would not inhibit industrial in-fill in blocks south of SW 100th Street, thus preserving some industrial uses in the community.

2. County policies encourage greater utilization of properties in the subarea.

As stated in policy **U-325**, “King County should use zoning, incentives or other measures to ensure that an appropriate proportion of the land adjacent or near to major public infrastructure facilities is used to capitalize on the economic benefit of that infrastructure.” The Greenbridge Hope VI development will add 200 to 400 for-sale homes to the area and replace 569 units of public housing. Even prior to the announcement of this development, the market research for the CBD revealed that White Center has the potential to capture a larger share of the local demand for everyday goods. The analysis projected a need for 143,000 square feet of new office space and from 30,000 to 68,000 square feet of retail space. The proposed zoning modifications will increase the square footage zoned for Community Business, accommodating the projected need and maximizing the community economic benefit resulting from public investment in Greenbridge.

The White Center Community Action Plan Policies also target the study area for redevelopment. Policy **ECD-4** encourages “full utilization” of industrial areas “consistent with the maintenance of high quality commercial residential areas.” Limiting redevelopment opportunities to industrial-based uses could stymie this policy goal. As previously discussed the White Center Business District and Revitalization Plan found limited potential for industrial redevelopment, but uncovered demand in other areas of the market. For example, the study reported an interest by local residents and property owners in “live/work facilities.” The logical place for such real estate products, the consultants believe, is in existing industrial zones. By not allowing this type of development, the existing industrial zoning could prevent live/work facility projects from going forward.

Conclusions:

The proposed zoning amendments are consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan Policies and the White Center Community Action Plan Policies.

- Community Business zoning will accommodate the type of redevelopment the community desires and the market research supports in the White Center Commercial Business District.
- Market research suggests that there is a limited potential for industrial development in the study area providing justification for the conversion of some industrial zoned lots to Community Business. The potential for industrial development will remain in the business district on parcels adjacent to the study area.

Executive Staff Recommendation:

Amend the zoning map to convert the following parcels from Industrial (I-SO) to Community Business within an Economic Redevelopment Special District Overlay (CB-SO):

0623049143

0623049006

2195100205

0623049226

0623049379

0623049208

0623049044

Modify the zoning for parcels 0623049215 and 0623049286 from I-SO to I-SO potential CB-SO to allow property owners the option for rezoning to Community Business as the market demands.

See the attached maps showing the recommended amendments.